

# Director seeks input from faculty

By Michael Hines  
Student Activities Reporter

There is a gulf between University Housing and faculty, and students are in the middle.

This is according to Mike Eyster, director of University Housing. The gulf was not created by design, he said, but it does exist.

Faculty are busy with classes and research, and housing is busy with providing good service, he said. And now it is time to eliminate that gulf.

Housing will expand the Honors Hall program to involve more students and faculty from the Robert D. Clark Honors College. More students want an academic

environment, Eyster said, and housing plans to comply.

But housing has larger questions. "What do they think University Housing should be?" asked Eyster. He will begin to have such questions answered after meeting with several faculty organizations in coming weeks.

Eyster said he rarely has a chance to speak with faculty, but when he does they often ask questions about residence hall life.

Faculty should understand how students live, Eyster said, and housing needs to understand the faculty.

By working with faculty members, Eyster said he hopes to in-

volve housing throughout the University.

"With the University's efforts at retention and recruitment, everybody is interested in doing anything we can to attract and maintain students at the University," he said. "Certainly, University Housing can play a significant role in recruiting and retention. I want to take advantage of this heightened interest to bridge the gap in involving faculty in University Housing."

Eyster said he wants to know the faculty's picture of the ideal residential campus. He believes that with dialogue, services on both sides of the gulf could improve.

# Housing: Changes could hurt greeks

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upgrade our buildings," Eyster said. Housing will not lose any paying residents after the rent increase, Eyster said. It offers one of the best rental values in Eugene, he said, and the early indication is that occupancy should be strong next year.

Residents will not be happy with the change, said Josh Greenough, chair of the Residence Hall Governance Committee.

"I don't like it, and I know the students aren't going to like it," he said, "but what do you do other than bankruptcy?"

ASUO President Bill Miner expressed similar thoughts. He said he has objections to some of Eyster's suggestions, but the rent increase is justified.

"I know where he's coming from," Miner said, "and I really don't envy his position."

Miner and Eyster met Jan. 30 to discuss the changes. And Miner said his priority was Eyster's proposal to keep residents to their contracts.

During the 1995-96 school year, residents could break their contracts, paying a fee of \$1 per day left on the contract. That fee increased to \$2 per day the next year.

"We're one of the few landlords in town that does that," he said.

Eyster said he now wants to hold all residents to their year-long contracts. This means that to leave housing, residents must pay off the remainder of their contracts, which is about \$9 per day.

"I can't afford to have students come here for a month and then meet someone off campus and move out," he said. "In the real world, you don't get to walk away from a contract."

One group this will affect is the greek system. Of approximately 3,500 people who lived in housing over the 1996-97 school year, 1,049 moved out before the end of the year. Greek houses were destinations for 218 of those residents.

Panhellenic and Interfraternity Council officials said they will meet with Eyster soon.

"We're kind of taking it on for the whole student body," Panhellenic Council President Marisa Ramsdell said. "You need to have the choice whether or not to move out."

She stressed this is a student body issue, not a greek issue.

Interfraternity Council President Steve Sutton said Eyster's change will hurt the greek system.

"It's definitely a threat to some of the fraternities," he said. "I think the University system needs to keep in mind whether or not they want to support one of their

largest student groups."

By holding residents to their contracts, fewer students will be moving into greek houses, Sutton said. This will result in the loss of two fraternity houses next year, and probably more after that, he said.

"I think it's mainly just the fact that we need to have people moving into the chapter houses just to maintain them," Sutton said.

Sutton said he hopes Eyster will not change the fee.

Greenough said he sees Eyster's proposal as beneficial to the residence halls.

"This is a good thing for people living in the residence halls because the people who leave are leaving a burden on the remaining students," he said.

There is a relationship between residents moving out and excessive conduct, Greenough said.

To take further steps to save housing money, Eyster said he plans on changing meal plans for employees.

No one change will make a big difference, Eyster said, but housing has a \$20 million self-supported budget and solid budget predictions are hard to make. Each small change will make a difference.

"These are changes that are designed to gradually put us in a better position," he said.

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